

THE EXHIBITION DESIGN IN THE FACE OF COMPLEXITY: INTER-ACTIVE STORY FROM DESIGN TO USER EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a new approach in the way of thinking mediation with a pragmatic vision in the approach to the communication and semiotic functioning of the language of the exponents. It examines the functioning of the exhibition as a "spatio-media" device in order to understand the way in which the production logic defines a reception modality and jointly translates a "formatting" of a relation to the presentation. In addition, we are interested in all the games of construction and semantic and exploratory coordination of the museum-expo. More precisely, this work explores the main question *how the exhibition operates, in order to unveil in a certain way the communication process and the regime of interactions (implied by this process) that is established between its actors, its objects, its entities, its spaces, its discourses, its relations, its situations, etc. in the instance of the visit?* We defend the idea that the attention of visitors, if indeed it is stimulated, is certainly more oblique than distracting and that it is also pointed and acute.

KEY WORDS:

DESIGN-EXHIBITION. DESIGN PROCESS. COMPLEXITY. DEVICE. REPRESENTATION. COMMUNICATION PROCESS. STRATEGY.

SUMMARY

This article proposes exploring the semio-pragmatic struggles that underlie the conception or the exploration of an exhibition. The methodology articulates a semio-pragmatic approach in relation to discourses, courses, inter-action, signification and the positions of actors in the analysis of the characteristics of enunciation "in procession». The objective of this semio-pragmatic analysis of the exhibition is to stimulate a systemic model of the operativity of the expographic language, that is to say to understand how the exhibition operates to unveil, in a certain way, the communicational process and the interaction regime(implied by this process) according to strategies defined beforehand.

The mode of the communicational operativity of the expographic language according to a semio-pragmatic prism, has allowed us to demonstrate that the process of the expographic signification oscillates according to a dual programme of enunciation and to consequently define the visit as a bi-cephalous communicational experience equally sensitive and cognitive. That is to say as an interaction experience either mediatized or mediatizable by a spatial and circumstantial device that communicates on the transparent user logics of interaction and signification. This mode has led us in short to consider the installation as a matrix of a spatio-media performance; a matrix in which each entity operates as a physical presence, at the same time, it should act as an instrument of discursive, interactional and expressive performances. Which matrix will stand up then while relying on a double-dealing editing inferential and ostensive at the same time. The last section of the article will be consecrated to the definition of a part of the mechanics of strategies and procedures of the exhibition implementation; those allowing to mediatize the installation.

INTRODUCTION:

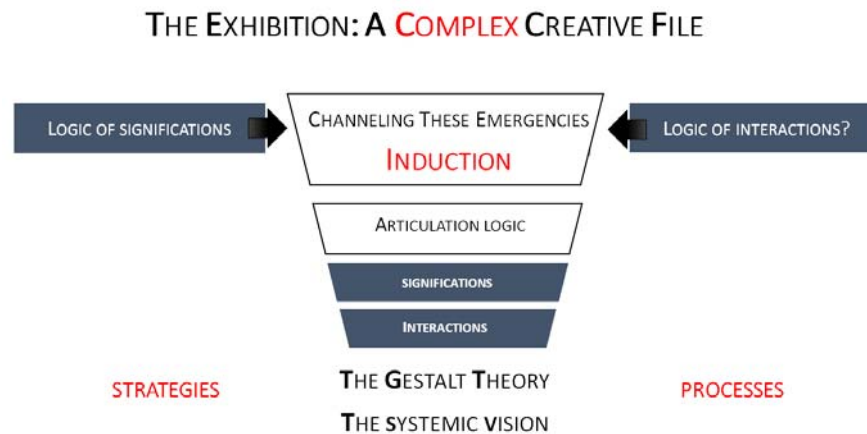
Recently, communication specialists have tried to find the image communication code. each one has got his/her approach and we discovered that the image can be thought, deciphered, perceived or well designed, in different ways according to the chosen code ... Semiology, structuralism, formalism, elementarism, psychology, etc. are all approaches that served the reflection on the language of the image. The space, the objects, the systems of objects and the exhibitions does not escape these analytical methods. Yet unfortunately, very few works discuss this language. We are also far away from the literary field or diverse critical forms that have helped to understand the logic (syntactic and syntagmatic) of literal sense production. KINDINSKI said that words had two senses, "one immediate sense and one interior hidden concealed sense". What about exhibitions? Should we reach both meanings? Does this hidden meaning (sense) really exist or do we think that this exhibition is sufficiently structured or organized to avoid the exploitation of this hidden sense. Should we communicate by getting inspired of words language or trying to find another way of communication through device?

Research in museology and communication sciences, especially those led by Jean Davallon, Daniel Jacobi, Eliseo Veron and Martine Levasseur showed that the exhibition, in its communicational functioning, is comparable to **a media**. Eliséo VERON and Martine LEVASSEUR present it as **a mass-media** (E. VERON, M. LEVASSEUR, 1996) and concede that it is spatial presentation that defines significant entities (E. VERON, M. LEVASSEUR, 1996). However, what seems interesting and remains, to our knowledge, still unexplored is to reflect on the way in which the mediatization takes place. That is to say, to understand how the production logic defines a reception modality reception and jointly transposes a format of a report to the presentation according to previously defined strategies. The act of communication in itself, invites us to reflect on the way in which the device transposes its communicative intention and informs on the logic of communication carried by these semiotized entities, these units, these relationships, these objects, and spaces, etc., and all interactions produced. This work explores the functioning of the exhibition as a spatial-media device to understand its operability, its modalities and then determine its strategies. The methodology articulates a semio-pragmatic approach, linking discourse, course, interaction, and signification and actor positions in the analysis of the characteristics of the enunciation "in procession". A main question will surround our reflection: How does this device operate, to reveal in a certain way, its

communicative process and the regime of mediatized interaction (what does this process imply) according to previously defined strategies?

1. THE INSTALLATION: A PERFORMANCE MATRIX

So, as a research object integrating "space design», the exhibition is defined as **heterogeneous entities articulation** (POMIAN Krzysztof, 1987) spatialized and organized **all in one** that once offered to visitors percept to become generator of a set of scenarios of course and discourse and therefore sense. The set of relationships (spatial, semantic and perceptual) that are woven between organized entities produces "in situation " that is to say in the instance of the visit by interaction and feedback of emergences (Units of signification, grouping effects, micro-events, micro-scenarios of course and discourse) that fit together, that complete each other and that make the system. The act of organization produces new qualities that do not exist in isolated entities. These qualities emanate to relationships and also conflicts of association between the entities that establish the exhibition. They are considered as emergences because they emerge with the organization. This is what is complex within this exhibition: it is the fact that the produced organization is self-produced, reproduced and produces emergences of elements structured by a certain spatialized discourse and therefore implies a certain **logic of expression and interaction**.



The creative file is therefore complex by the way that we can't predetermine in advance a specific logic of emergences. That is to say of interactions or of significations. However, we can anticipate or even canalize these emergences -that is to say- by dint of seeing we can assume that such an articulating logic would imply either interaction or signification. And this is how we can justify our return to the **Gestalt theory** (J. PIAGET, 1968) and also to the **Systemic Vision** (Edgar MORIN, 2005) of the reflection that is based on a set of processes and strategies of the exhibition. To exhibit is to think about the organization entities that constitute the installation **all in one** which it should structure OR if you want canalize these **emergences** (J-F. DORTIER, 2008). In reality the keystone is here Because in the design process there is always an act of entities or a quality organization for a given purpose; And what is going to be good in our context, is to lend the device to use, to prepare it to **signification** and **interaction**; in a word, the visit. From a conceptual point of view, it is about to pass from an **open and spontaneous emergence logic** to a **preconceived logic of emergence** -that is to say- **predictable and programmable** to a certain degree.

The use of the "**concept of device**" is justified in a way that we explicitly discern logic of means implemented with a view to a pre-determined end. As such, the installation process can be defined or perceived as being the embodiment of an intention through the setting up of an environment arranged according to a certain **instrumental rationality**. This instrumental rationality would combine a **logic of "transmission"** to a **logic of "experience"** or even of "**experimentation**" centered on the visitor as much as on the expression. This first definition leads us to consider the installation as a framework organizing the action as much as the expression. That is to say, as a strongly organized and highly semiotic device, that turns not to be completely open, but rather, framed in a certain way by the logic of space.

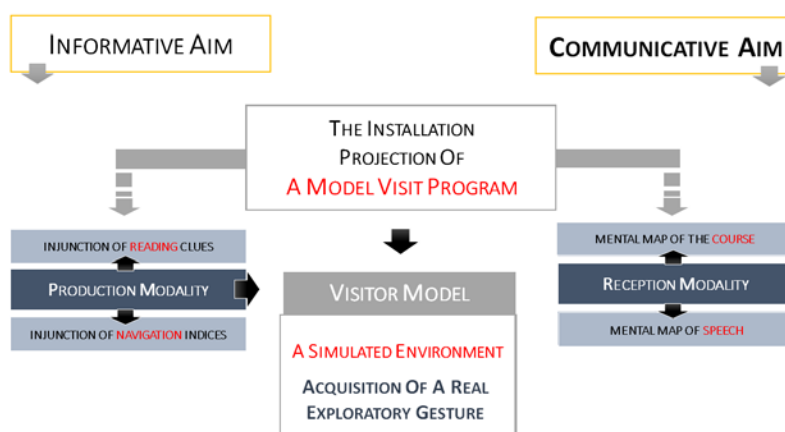
The exhibition instrumentalizes objects through the installation to make the exhibition function as media. This is to say to come "in context" to link objects to both discourse and percepts. The very fact of considering the installation as a contact interface, would invite the designers to construct it in such a way, as to suggest visitors clues of understanding that is to say reading and navigation clues. Conceiving an exhibition is therefore to build and semiotize an installation according to a **bicephalous encoding-reception approach**. The act of installation would be comparable to a **"dialogical" exercise** during which the designers transpose a discourse while prefiguring and modulating through editing all the **relevant interactional and expressive inferences**. We, thus, come to consider the installation as a spatio-media performance matrix ;That is to say, a matrix in which each entity operates as a physical presence, at the same time, that it must act as a tool of discursive interactive and expressive performance .This matrix is, therefore, based on a double assembly game both **inferential and ostensive**.

2. THE INSTALLATION: EXHIBITION STRATEGIES

The exam the diapositive operativity of the exhibition demonstrates that the presentation-representation process is not enough to make the exhibition a communicating device. What is played out in the exhibition is the construction of a discourse on objects as well as on how to "understand" and "interact" with them. Exhibition must communicate to the visitor the need to perceive through its distribution a dictation of the way to proceed in order to **"interact"** and **"make meaning"** its combinatory. We will see immediately what this consideration implies in terms of production strategies.

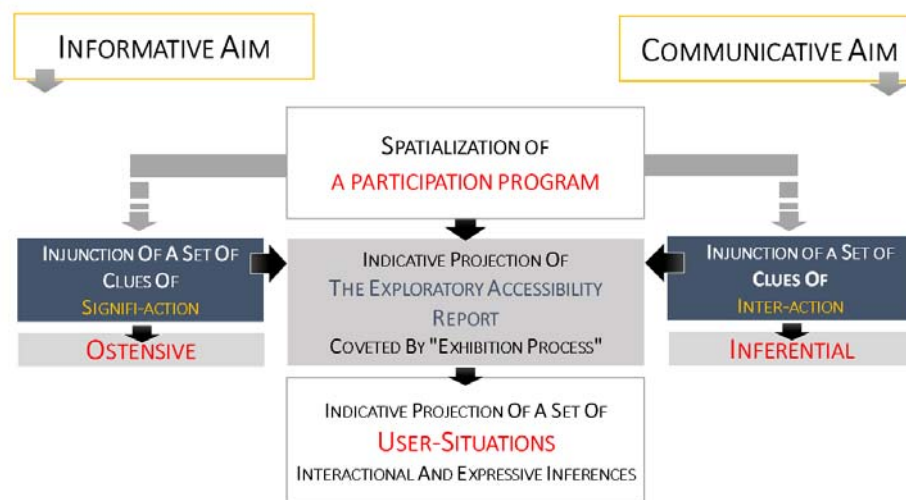
2.1 VISITOR INTEGRATION STRATEGY:

On the conceptually-communicational side, this consideration leads to the conclusion that the exhibition is obliged to spatialize a program of participation. This program would communicate to the visitor, in particular by means of injunction of set of **clues of signifi-actions and inter-actions**, the exploratory accessibility report coveted by "the exhibition". This accessibility report turns out to be **inferential and ostensive** because it is based on the projection of a set of user situations, with interactional and expressive inferences. We do not assume that the visitor is conforming to a closed behavioral model, rather we consider that the exhibition should, in particular by means of this injunction of **expression and navigation clues**, seek to direct the visitor towards a **model visitor** profile similar to that of the **model reader** designated by Umberto Eco in his book *The limits of interpretation* (Umberto ECO, 1992).



This concept of model visitor is based on a dialectic that envisages a model visitor at the same time as it aspires to create him or her; a visit is based on a certain competence but also contributes to its production. This modeling is thus defined by taking the visitor into account in the development of a **participation program** that implicitly guides him/her in the exploration of content and jointly ensures the success of his/her meeting with the device. This injunction of clues would therefore set up and allow the visitor to access in a simulated environment dictating, implicitly, the modalities of meanings covered with other interactions, and would thus allow the latter to acquire a certain **exploratory gestuality**. This injunction of clues therefore allows the visitor to draw a **mental map of the operativity of the course and the discourse**.

In this regard, Duncan CAMERON notes that the exhibition presents information organized according to the overall model that the visitor perceives [...] the visitor is thus confronted with a variable number of inputs from which he must select a few samples to give himself a significant concept of the exhibition (Duncan CAMERON, 1968). Roy HARRIS adds that any context necessarily presupposes previous contexts, and fits by itself, so to speak, into a time series (Roy HARRIS, 1993).

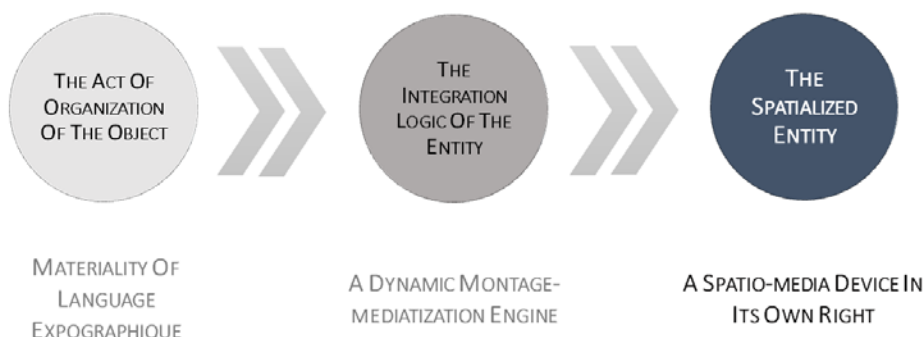


In this way, the installation would set up a **mediation program**, a communication coherence program that would guide, modify or complete the exploratory functioning of the visitor. It also follows that the visitor now knows that the objects are not arranged randomly. It is also the logic of disposition that will allow him to access the intentionality of the designer. The reception would therefore be, to a certain degree, framed by the set of strategies of space. That is to say, to make a connection between the spatial status of objects and the various visitor appropriation strategies.

2.2. THE INSTALLATION: THE ENTITY'S INTEGRATION STRATEGY

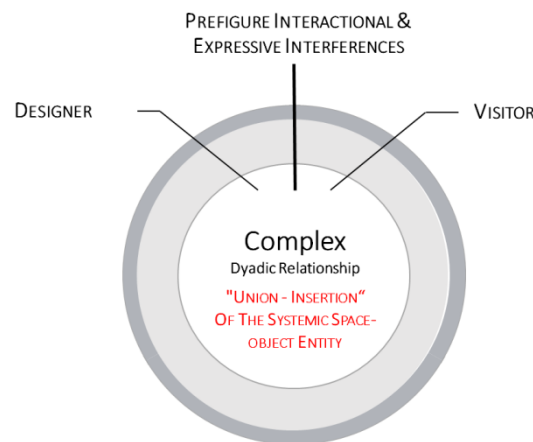
The reflection, in terms of structure, monstrative and representative system implies, therefore, to return to the act of organization of the object, to define it as the very **materiality of the expographic language**. This observation leads us to consider the conceptual logic underlying the installation of the entity as a **dynamic editing-media engine**. It also leads us to consider the spatialized entity in itself as a **spatio-media device** in its own way.

MONSTRATIF SYSTEM VS REPRESENTATIVE SYSTEM



Moreover, by integrating itself into the exhibition, the object is inserted in a field composed of a set of heterogeneous entities brought into interaction. These entities are differentiated from one another according to the visual, spatial and semantic relationships structuring their insertion. Such relationships are defined and accommodated based on a set of evolving goals. These relationships therefore operate as "**inductive-productive**". In his book from form to place by addressing the subject of the spatiality of objects Pierre VON MEISS stipulates that when several objects are grouped together their radiation fields overlap

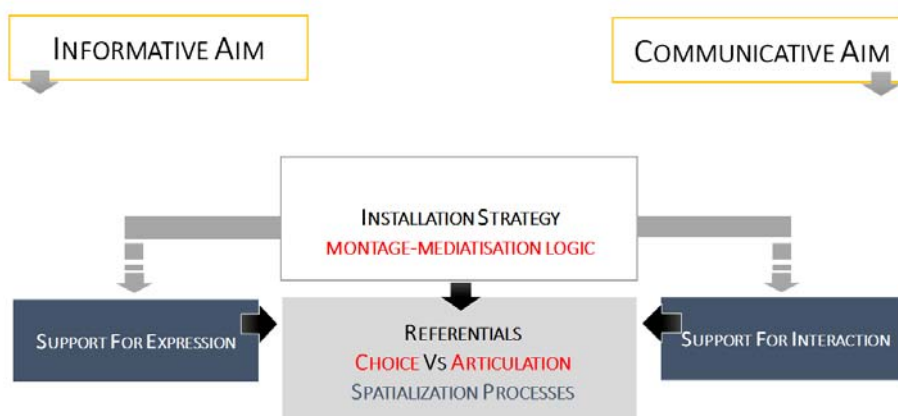
(Pierre VON MEISS, 1986). The object is not only[seen as] an emitter of radiation, it is also[perceived as] a mediator between the observer and the space that encompasses them (Pierre VON MEISS, 1986). The exhibition consists, then, of prefiguring the union of space and object in a systemic whole (Edgar MORIN, 2005) whose exact structure and definition would not cease to be constantly changing. Space and object are thus perceived as two fusional entities (PARR AE, 1961). The question would be, therefore, to what extent could we speak of a **complex relational system** for this dyad.



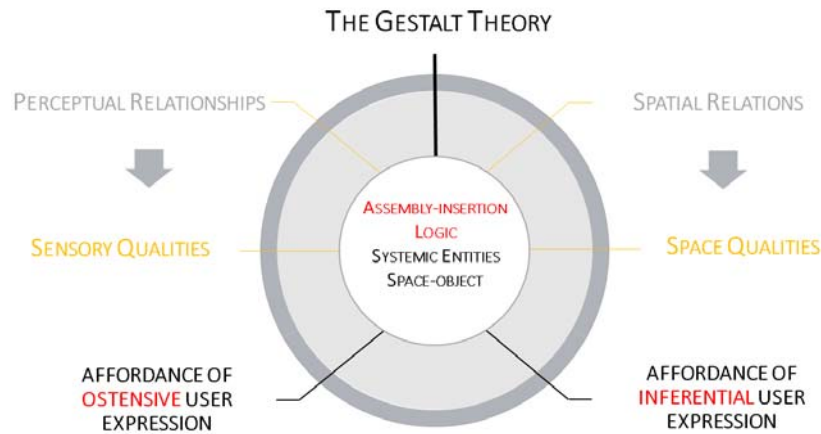
This dyadic relationship is correlative to the degree of interpenetration of the two object-space entities. It implies prefiguring the logic coordinating their association, in order to anticipate and modulate, through installation, the semantic and interactive resonances of **the association of their respective fields of influence** (Pierre VON MEISS, 1986). This dyadic relationship is complex because it invites the designer as much as the visitor to prefigure, modulate or guess, through editing, all the interactional and expressive inferences resulting from this **"union- insertion "of the systemic space-object entity** (Edgar MORIN, 2005).

2.3. MEDIATIZATION STRATEGY

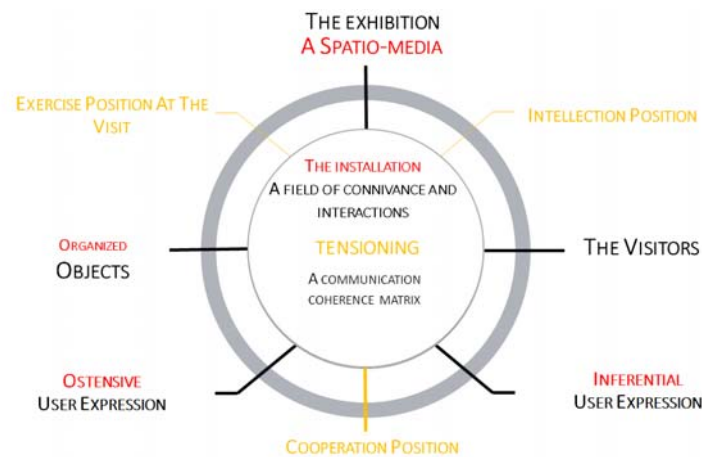
The geometry of the organization of each object, by being combined with the dynamic structure of space, composes in reality a systemic screen of interactional and expressive filtering, that is to say, a dynamic media screen. The designer must therefore design the installation according to a media editing logic, that is to say, by considering the support of expression and interaction as regulatory data for the choice and articulation of various spatialization processes.



The object often gives itself to perceive through an environment that enhances its qualities. Any visible object also extends beyond its limits and implicitly informs, to a certain extent, about the field of spatiality in which it is part. In his book "from form to place" Pierre VON MEISS concedes that objects are rarely isolated; they are in the company of other volumes or limits. Space arises from the relationships between these elements (Pierre VON MEISS, 1986). Space is essential - on its side as a place where differences are replayed (Daniel SIBONY, 1991).



The editing and insertion of all **systemics space-object** entities should therefore be reflected according to a conceptual vision filled with strong fundamental impulses. This vision should, in addition, be inspired by the **GESTALT theory** (J. PIAGET, 1968) to determine the set of relationships or spatial qualities consenting affordance of **the inferential and ostensive user expression** of all the constituent entities of the exhibition. These qualities or relationships implicitly invite the visitor to "**see into**" and "**see through**" entities spatially distinguished at the same time as appropriate to all objectives leading to their insertion.



The exhibition would spatialize through the installation **a double enunciation** that envelops visitors and organized entities in an interactional and interpretative discursiveness. The installation would thus be operative as **a field of connivance and interaction**, that is to say, as a matrix of communicational coherence; Placing the visitor in a **position of intellection**, at the same time, from **exercise to visit**. This matrix would also allow, by "placing the visitor" in constant tension with all organized objects, to make the device work like **a space-media stimulating its cooperation**. Then give the freedom to the visitor either to participate or not to this **game of mediatization**.

3. SPATIAL MEDIATIZATION PROCESSES

The performance of the installation proves to be dependent on the articulation of a set of spatial processes of "**putting in tension**" and of "**matching**" semantic and perceptual resulting, in addition, by spatial methods of media coverage. These processes channelize and impact, in an implicit as well as a discursive way, the exploratory functioning of the visitor.

3.1. SPATIAL METHODS OF PERCEPTUAL AND EXPRESSIVE CALIBRATION:

Among these processes I mention as an example, first of all, the Installation of a **system of differences** as a process used **to inscribe or dilate an expression of hierarchy** (visual or expressive affordance). This process consists of a **systemic articulation of opposition relations (contrast or exception)** allowing the designer to communicate to the visitor the expression of dominance of one or more entities over the others. This System of differences therefore allows designers to operate a certain "**framing-modulation**" of the

perceptive and expressive accessibility. Pierre VON MEISS concedes that hierarchy is not - only - a question of dimension but of the relative position of an element in relation to its context. Hierarchy is a more complex order by combining elements related to a scale of importance. To create a hierarchy we can use not only the variation of relative dimensions, but also the variation of the arrangement and singularity of the form in relation to a context (Pierre VON MEISS, 1986). SLUTZKY says that, in Le Corbusier's work, positive spaces are invested with a formal value equivalent to that of the objects that generate them (Robert SLUTZKY, 1980). He refers here to this primary requirement of composition by contrast; to inflect one form under the action of the other, the void itself being a term of opposition; for the opposites to communicate, however, the differences must be sufficiently marked. -However, we know few rules to achieve this, as the nature of oppositions can take many different forms. The eye remains the main judge (Pierre VON MEISS, 1986).

3.2. SPATIAL METHODS OF PERCEPTUAL AND EXPRESSIVE GROUPING

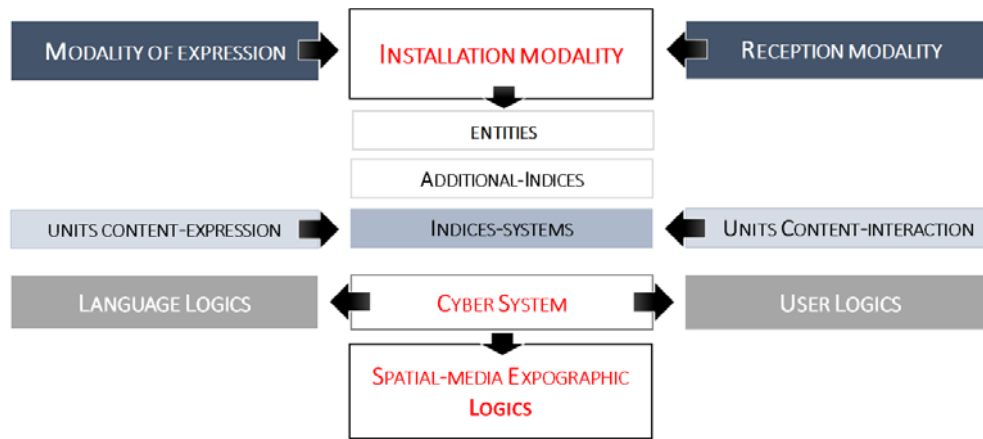
Exposing invites designers to segmenting the circuit into a set of autonomous groups that represent the discourse. Certain processes allowing the installation or dilation of an **Expression of a perceptual or of a expressive grouping**. We all know that proximity makes it possible to bring together what is different (Pierre VON MEISS, 1986). It would therefore be possible for designers to exalt an **expression of unity or grouping** based on the modulation of proxemic relations. It would also be possible for designers to amplify the expression of a group through the recurrence of a set of spatial attributes. These attributes would further strengthen the expression of visual coherence and therefore of perceptual unity. **The similarities and repetitions** operated, in the form of rhythm, can also be added together to suggest a clearly discernible serial effect or serialization (Pierre VON MEISS, 1986).

3.3. SPATIAL METHODS OF PERCEPTIVE AND EXPRESSIVE ANCHORING

The similarities and repetitions are still presented as **operators of attention**, they solicit the visitor through their rhythmic inscription to establish a relationship of particular attention. I propose the example of the repetition of the same color, and its recurrence throughout the course, which would attract the visitor's attention and indicate the intention to communicate in a certain way. **Contrast systems**, on their part, present themselves as **operators of distinction of attention registers**. They lead the visitor to initiate a certain **homologation of similarities and oppositions** and thereby authorize the visitor to differentiate between the various enunciative levels or registers of the circuit as would be the case in the architecture of a text, an interface or a book.

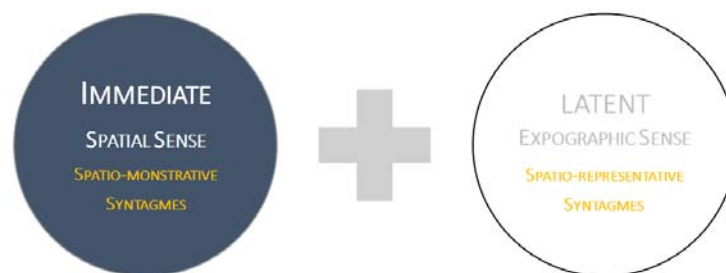
Conclusion

The exhibition gives us "to see", "to know" as well as it explains to us through the installation, how to interact and make signify its combinatory. And this is where it implements the double virtue of media, by imposing itself both as a support and intermediary to the production as well as the reception of discourse. In this way, the exhibition is considered as a **spatio-media device** and the installation as **Interface and encoding-reception matrix**. That is to say, the set of entities, which constitutes the exhibition, convert by means of installation, to operate in the instance of the visit as additional clues, and constitute a **system of clues** that combine afterwards into a series of **content-expression** and **content-interaction units**, which makes **cyber-system**. This cyber-system proves to be generator of signification, and even generator of **language logic** and **user expographic logic**, and therefore, generator of **spatial media expographic logic**. The exhibition is then, not only considered as a "system of language "but also perceived as a **device that makes expression and language operating**. Thereby, it is to integrate in the field of "receivers" and "objects" organized in a way to make the communication of a discourse effective.



The exhibition thus presents itself as an extremely constructed organization that regulates, by means of its order scheme, the encounter with the object. The articulation of all spatial mediatization processes contributes to the creation of a set of **spatio-monstrative** and **spatio-representative syntagmes**. This articulation makes it possible to make signify the **immediate spatial sense** and the **latent expographic sense** of each Systemic Entities space-object. The exhibition would thus materialize a coherence between what is expected in reception and what is proposed in production, so that the visitor finds himself caught up in the logic of his device as much as in all the socio-systemic units (situations) prefigured by his organization.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE EXHIBITION



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